

# BALANCED HEALTH

# USING NLP TECHNIQUES FOR WEIGHT LOSS

NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING – OR NLP AS IT IS COMMONLY KNOWN – IS A STRATEGY THAT MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE INTEGRATING INTO THEIR HEALTH REGIME TO SUCCESSFULLY HELP THEM LOSE WEIGHT. TONI KRASICKI EXPLAINS.

**THE DISCOVERY OF** Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is widely attributed to co-founders Richard Bandler and John Grinder who, while researching personal development and human behavioural therapy, found what they believed to be revolutionary links between behavioural patterns and subconscious thought processes. The name itself denotes the importance of the correlation between how we think (neuro), the language we use (linguistic), and our behavioural and emotional patterns (programming).

Forty years on and NLP techniques have become powerful tools for behavioural modification and personal development. Commonly exercised in management training, life coaching, and the self-help industry, it focuses on overcoming learned limitations and achieving specific goals quickly. Needless to say, NLP is becoming popular in the field of weight loss and the cessation of unhealthy behavioural patterns.

To better understand the theory behind NLP, we spoke with Lyn Woodward, an NLP practitioner and founder of the 'Activate Your Mind Program', which specialises in the psychology behind weight issues.

Lyn uses the analogy that our 'mind is like a computer with programs installed that help us respond to and make choices in life. These programs, or patterns of behaviour and emotions, are made up from our experiences throughout life. But some programs may be subconsciously sabotaging us from reaching our goals, whether

they are weight, relationship, career or financial.'

'More often than not, we are not even aware of these negative patterns or thoughts. And just like a computer, sometimes our brain needs defragmenting and files need to be updated. NLP gives us a specific range of tools and techniques that help us become aware of, and change these files and any unwanted 'programming' at an unconscious level.'

#### SO WHY DO DIETS FAIL?

Lyn believes that 'diets are like a band-aid for the problem – they will work for a while, but due to feeling restricted, we will always, at some point, go back to old habits or programming.'

All this hits very close to home as Lyn confesses to being a chronic yo-yo dieter for most of her adult life. 'I was approaching 40 and realised that I could not live another 20 years dieting every Monday and failing every Tuesday!'

Applying her training in NLP and skills and knowledge from 15 years in the fitness industry, she has designed a set of specific techniques to aid people in changing their attitude to food and exercise.

'It's more or less like flicking a switch, you can still eat what you want,' explains Lyn. 'You genuinely prefer to eat healthy foods or enjoy exercising.'

Lyn's program examines each individual's specific psychological associations to food, eating and exercise. It approaches weight issues from many different angles to find out

what's going on underneath the surface. Here are a couple of her techniques that you can try yourself.

To change your associations with certain foods:

- + Decide on a food that you want to remove from your diet or develop a dislike for (e.g., butter or margarine).
- + Think of something revolting with a similar appearance and texture, for instance, pus from a boil.
- + Imagine where it has come from and what it looks like, the repulsive smell and how it makes you feel.
- + Imagine having a butter-dish full of pus and then scraping it onto your toast, nice and thick, and then taking a big bite. What can you smell and taste? How does it feel?
- + As you smell, taste and feel, think about butter or margarine on the toast you are eating.
- + How do you feel about butter or margarine now?

Have you ever thought 'I can't lose weight' or 'I'll never be fit'? These limiting beliefs or statements that subconsciously stop us from achieving our goals may be what are sabotaging you. We weren't born thinking these thoughts, so at some specific point in our lives we decided to think this way. So try this technique to help you identify where you might be sabotaging yourself:

- + Sit in a quiet place.
- + Write down a limiting belief that may be sabotaging your weight loss and fitness goals (e.g., 'I am too lazy').
- + Think of a 'wanted belief', a belief that you would rather have (e.g., 'I am motivated to lose weight and exercise regularly').
- + Close your eyes and ask yourself 'where was I when I was deciding this?' and take note of whatever memory pops into your head.
- + Imagine you are in the back of a cinema watching your memory on a movie screen and think about what you can learn from what you are seeing.
- + Write down everything that you learn from the memory, keep looking and asking until you feel completely different about the original limiting belief.
- + Finally, write down three instances when you could have had the wanted belief, but because of the limiting belief we just broke down you couldn't see the possibility... until now.

With the right assistance, this sort of activity can be incredibly powerful on an unconscious level, setting your mind and body in a much more positive and goal-focused direction which, in turn, can allow you to achieve anything you want!

To find out more contact Lyn Woodward, the founder of the Activate Your Mind Program ([www.activateyourmind.com.au](http://www.activateyourmind.com.au)), which specialises in the psychology behind weight issues. Lyn also runs training courses around Australia for people who want to become Licencees of the Activate Your Mind Program.



Sessions usually last around one hour and some private health funds now provide rebates for treatment.

#### TONI KRASICKI, BHMS (ExSc) PGDipHlthProm

Toni is a group exercise instructor with almost 20 years experience in the industry both here and abroad. She is a freelance writer and can be contacted via [tkrasicki@hotmail.com](mailto:tkrasicki@hotmail.com)

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